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June 18, 2019

Governor Philip D. Murphy
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Murphy:

In both February and October 2018, I wrote to you (letters attached) about the presence of lead water in New Jersey schools, and the health and safety impacts of lead exposure to our children. Given continuous reports since, my concerns about child lead exposure have in no way dissipated. Yet, during this time, I have not received an update or response from your office, nor have I received the list I requested of schools that have failed to conduct lead testing and certification as required by state law. I know that you share my commitment to the health and safety of our children, and I hope you will pay close personal attention to this issue.

I am encouraged by many of the actions your Administration has taken to strengthen our state's clean water standards, including the new rule proposed by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP) to increase monitoring of harmful substances including perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) in our drinking water. This strict new requirement will help New Jersey lead the fight against harmful contaminants.

However, there is more work to be done. Instances of elevated levels of lead in water continue to threaten our communities and schools. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), lead exposure in children carries dangerous consequences, including a breakdown of the central nervous system and brain. This can lead to lifelong medical problems, and even death. Even small levels of exposure once thought to be safe can cause decreased cognitive functioning, behavioral difficulties, and learning disorders.

Inaction is not an option. The problem of lead-water in schools is particularly acute. According to a report by NJ Future, fewer than fifteen percent of school districts in our state forwarded data on positive lead test results to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). Among those school districts that did report, more than 300 schools tested positive, including schools in Ridgewood and Oakland in my own District.

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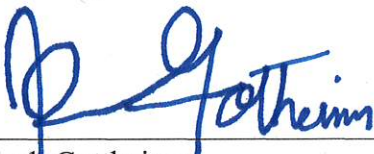
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Because of this critical situation, I again respectfully urge you to provide me with an update and full report on the statewide status of school testing, including a breakdown of schools that have not complied with testing and notification requirements.

I look forward to your reply, and I hope we can work together to ensure that our shared constituents have vital access to clean drinking water in school. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Josh Gottheimer". The signature is stylized, with the first name "Josh" written in a cursive-like script and the last name "Gottheimer" in a more formal, slightly cursive script. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

Josh Gottheimer
MEMBER OF CONGRESS